



**Consul General's Remarks to
Melbourne Cricket Club War Veterans Group
February 13, 2008**

Let me begin today with a simple thank you.

The values we all treasure - human liberty, freedom from want and freedom from deprivation - have not come without sacrifice, and we are deeply indebted to all of you who fought those many years ago to create a better life for us all.

Simply put, we would not be enjoying the freedoms we have today with out the sacrifice and bravery of Veterans like you, and without the

bravery of the young men who fought, and never returned to their homes.

In less than a week's time I will be going to Darwin to participate in ceremonies commemorating the 66th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin. We will gather in Darwin to honor Australians and Americans alike, who stood side by side and bravely countered the unprovoked, surprise attack on Australian soil perpetrated by the air force of Imperial Japan.

The sad event in 1942 ushered the Second World War to Australia's doorstep and violently echoed the preceding attack on Pearl Harbor, when, on a Sunday morning two and a half months earlier, America awoke to the enemy's deceit and brutality. It was, as then President Franklin Delano

Roosevelt termed it, "A date which will live in infamy."

While it may seem that the bombing of Darwin has faded into the past, and some people would consign it to oblivion in the pages of history books I believe that it is our responsibility to remember and honor those sacrifices; –as the beneficiaries of the sacrifices made by those who fought and died for freedom's sake. We must remember and honor the lives given in service to Australia and to the United States and in the defense of our common liberty.

Having participated in several ceremonies in the course of my duties as Consul General, including ANZAC Day, I have found that as a nation, Australian's commemorate and remember war time sacrifices and events very well. I commend

you for the way you are passing that civic torch on to your young people.

Last week I was happy to host four American World War II veterans at a luncheon that Stan Guilfoyle also attended. The Veterans were on a tour of the Pacific, organized by an American group called "The Greatest Generations Foundation".

It was very interesting to hear these veterans tell their stories and hear of their efforts to explain the World War II period to younger generations. Each of these men undertake school visits, speaking with students about their experiences in World War II, to ensure that new generations of American's have a good, true, and first hand account of events of the War.

I understand that many of you here today also participate in visits to schools, speaking to students and answering their questions.

Therefore I am sure that you will all be as interested as I was to learn about the Greatest Generations Foundation. The Foundation was created and is now run by a dynamic young Australian named Timothy Davies. Tim met and married an American lady and is now living in Denver.

Tim's passion for supporting American veterans has been influenced by his own family history. For generations, many of Tim's relatives took part in the world's great wars.

As a young man, Tim became intrigued with the efforts and triumphs of those who fought in the

great wars. He grew up hearing stories from his Grandfather, William "Bill" Davis, who served with the Australian Navy in 1944 and 1945, along with his uncle, Joseph Marshall, who served with the RAAF during the Battle of Britain in 1940. Tim's great uncle, Roy Ridd, also served with the Australia Light Horse Regiment in World War I. Their examples of service inspired Tim to believe there is still much to learn from the veterans with us today.

The Greatest Generation Foundation is dedicated to honoring veterans for their timeless and selfless dedication to duty, which has ensured our freedoms that endure today. The foundation is committed to educating all people about the extraordinary history of sacrifice, and the noble accomplishments of brave men and

women in battlegrounds across the European and Pacific theaters.

The Greatest Generation Foundation's mission is to provide veterans with what they call "Battlefield Remembrances", supporting and sponsoring trips for war veterans to return to the very battlefields where they risked everything for what was right, and where they saw their comrades lay down their lives for a noble cause. The veterans revisit the sites of their battlefield campaigns, traveling free of charge. These courageous groups of Veterans include generations of men and women who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea, and in Vietnam.

On their visit to the Consulate, Tim explained that these experiences bring a sense of closure for

some, bring tears to most, and bring peace to the hearts of many.

This visit yet again brought home to me, how very important it is for us all to work to preserve the memories of and lessons learned by our Veterans.

As many of you are aware, Melbourne is currently playing host to the filming of the new movie epic "The Pacific". "The Pacific" is produced by Stephen Spielberg and Tom Hanks. I saw in the news, as many of you would have also, Flinders street transformed, back in time for filming of the movie.

For this I commend Hanks and Spielberg for their efforts in documenting what happened in the Pacific. They are the new generation of

storytellers who are working to ensure that a whole new audience will have exposure and understanding of the stories of the Pacific during World War II.

In light of last week's visit by the Veterans to the consulate, it is timely that as I address you today, I also have my visit to Darwin at the forefront of my mind. Among the lessons we take from Darwin, and the battles of the Pacific, the most important lesson is to maintain our tradition of standing together to confront aggression and tyranny.

Australians and Americans believe strongly in freedom, democracy, the rule of law and the value of the individual. It is those values and the commitment to protect and defend them that

have brought us together and will keep us together far into the future.

As each of you are aware from your own experiences and friendships, American and Australian soldiers have served together in every major conflict since World War I. While the nature of the challenges to international peace and security has changed since the Second World War, the need for close cooperation with friends and allies in countering them, has not.

Today's Service men and women follow in your footsteps. Like the generations that have come before them, they are upholding the noble traditions of duty, honor and love of country. Today our Armed Forces strive to secure our nation's future in a new century by answering today's dangers and challenges with firm resolve.

Today's campaigns are just as important as those found in the pages of history. The Alliance partners engaged in Afghanistan and our allied forces in Iraq are working to not only secure our freedoms, but to create an environment where democracy can flourish in regions of the world that have suffered too long under tyrannical rulers.

In the final State of the Union address of his administration on January 28th, President Bush told Congress, "Men and women who are free to determine their own destinies will reject terror and refuse to live in tyranny." President Bush also stated clearly in his address that "Our foreign policy is based on a clear premise: We trust that people, when given the chance, will choose a future of freedom and peace."

As a new generation of American and Australian armed forces confront the threat of terrorism to the free world, we remember the bonds on which our Alliance is built, the history that our two countries share. As we work together for peace and prosperity, we draw inspiration from the service, and honor the memory of the Greatest Generation who sacrificed so much for the cause of freedom.

May we always take courage from your brave example.

Thank you.